

'Transforming Breast Cancer Together Initiative' Launches Manifesto

Brussels, 09 April 2019 – The Transforming Breast Cancer Initiative today launched a manifesto which urges incoming Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission to ensure that breast cancer prevention and care are a top priority during their mandate, and that the issue ranks high on both the EU and Member States agendas.

The manifesto, entitled “**European Elections Manifesto 2019: Seizing the Opportunities for Breast Cancer Patients**”, comes ahead of the European elections and the establishment of the new commission to set the stage for important discussions on the priorities for the European Union over the next five years.

The key recommendations of Manifesto are:

- 1. Ensuring breast cancer is screened, diagnosed and treated at an early stage and that all breast cancer patients have access to treatment in a breast unit by a specialized multidisciplinary team.**
- 2. Ensuring return to work programmes for breast cancer patients and survivors.**
- 3. Maintaining a favourable environment for the collection of breast cancer data and the development of innovative health technologies.**

Dr. Fatima Cardoso, Director of the Breast Unit of the Champalimaud Clinical Center in Lisbon and member of the Transforming Breast Cancer Together Initiative said *“For any incoming MEP or Commissioner, tackling breast cancer should be a top priority. We are still seeing major inequalities across the individual EU member states in breast cancer diagnosis and care, which result in some countries having much lower survival rates than others.”*

Commenting on the publication of the manifesto, MEP Lieve Wierinck said *“This Manifesto reflects our collective efforts and we hope these recommendations will be another milestone in our journey to a better quality of life for those affected by breast cancer. I hope that my current and future colleagues alike in the Parliament will join me in this important initiative, which will do so much to improve the lives of people with breast cancer”*. A statement echoed by MEP Elena Gentile who underlines that *“we need to keep working hard to ensure that diagnosis and therapies are accessible to all patients throughout Europe, in order to create the conditions that will enable women to continue having a leading role in their lives”*.

Breast cancer still is the leading cause of cancer death in women and European women's probability of developing breast cancer over a lifetime is approximately 1 in 8.¹ Breast cancer is not only a population health problem, but also as a socio-economic problem, as it underlines that European healthcare systems are still heterogeneous and high inequalities still exist when it comes to access, quality and patient outcomes in Europe. Due to its high incidence, breast cancer has the highest health care costs of all cancer-related health care costs in Europe.

Susan Knox, Executive Director of Europa Donna- The European Breast Cancer Coalition and member of the Transforming Breast Cancer Together Initiative concludes that *“this manifesto aims to address the main policy issues associated with breast cancer today. We need to confront all the issues, to ensure appropriate screening, treatment, psychological and social support. We need to put patients and women at the centre of all policies, to ensure improved outcomes across Europe from this devastating disease.”*

About the Transforming Breast Cancer Together initiative

‘Transforming Breast Cancer Together’ initiative was established in November 2017, by Lieve Wierinck (ALDE) and Elena Gentile (S&D), Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The goal of this initiative is to improve services for patients in an area of still high unmet need and reduce the societal impact of breast cancer by elevating it as a health policy priority to improve breast cancer prevention, diagnosis and care across Europe.

The initiative is driven by a group that currently includes MEPs Lieve Wierinck (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe – ALDE), Elena Gentile (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats – S&D) and Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (European People's Party – EPP), Advanced Breast Cancer (ABC) Global Alliance, Eli Lilly and Company, European Society of Surgical Oncology, Europa Donna – The European Breast Cancer Coalition, European Cancer Patient Coalition, European School of Oncology, European Society of Breast Cancer Specialists, GE Healthcare, Helsinn, Novartis and Working With Cancer.

For further details, please contact William Scharf from FTI Consulting at: William.Scharf@fticonsulting.com.

¹ European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (2018) “Recommendations from European Breast Guidelines” Accessible available [here](#).

